



STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION STAFF LEGISLATIVE BILL ANALYSIS

Date Introduced:	02/24/00	Bill No:	AB 2348
Tax:	Sales and Use	Author:	Ducheny
Board Position:		Related Bills:	AB 2345 (Ducheny) SB 1701 (Johnson)

BILL SUMMARY:

This bill would provide a sales and use tax exemption for sales and purchases of college textbooks by students, as specified and defined.

ANALYSIS:

Current Law:

Under existing law, the sale of books are subject to the sales or use tax to the same extent as the sale of any other tangible personal property not specifically exempted by law. With the exception of high school yearbooks and catalogs, tax applies to the sale of any book to elementary and high school students, as well as college students. Tax also applies to the sale of any book to a library, to the state, and to any political subdivision of the state.

Proposed Law:

This bill would add Section 6361.7 to the Sales and Use Tax Law to provide an exemption for the sale and purchase of any textbook that is purchased by a student at an institution of higher education or from an entity whose primary purpose is to provide textbooks to students attending institutions of higher education, for use as a learning resource in any course of study at that institution.

This bill would define “textbook” to mean any published material that is principally designed for use by a student at an institution of higher education as a source of instructional material and includes, but is not limited to, any book or edition of a book, as so described, that a student is directed or recommended by an instructor at an institution of higher education to purchase for use as a basis for a course of study at that institution.

This bill would define an “institution of higher education” to mean any public or private college or university that is nationally or regionally accredited.

This bill would require students to present a valid student identification card, issued by an institution of higher education, in order to receive the benefit of the textbook sales tax exemption.

This staff analysis is provided to address various administrative, cost, revenue and policy issues; it is not to be construed to reflect or suggest the Board's formal position.

The bill would become effective immediately, but would become operative on the first day of the calendar quarter commencing more than 90 days after the date the bill is enacted.

Background:

Two measures with similar provisions have been previously introduced. Assembly Bill 2051 (Firestone), introduced in the 1998 Legislative Session, contained language that would have provided a partial sales and use tax exemption (6 percent) for sales of college textbooks to students. The bill failed passage in the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee. The Board was neutral on Assembly Bill 2051. Assembly Bill 490 (Ducheny), as amended January 3, 2000, also contained language providing a partial sales and use tax exemption (6 percent) for sales of college textbooks to students. The bill failed passage from its house of origin before it was presented to the Board for a position.

COMMENTS:

1. Sponsor and Purpose. The purpose of this bill is to help make college textbooks more affordable for college students. Currently, the author is the sponsor of the bill.
2. Proposed exemption would place an added record-keeping burden on book store retailers. The law provides that for the purpose of the proper administration of the sales and use tax and to prevent evasion of the sales tax, it shall be presumed that all gross receipts are subject to the tax until the contrary is established. In order for book store retailers to rebut this presumption, they would be required to establish to the satisfaction of the Board that the books they sell for which an exemption is claimed under the provisions of this measure are not subject to the sales or use tax. Consequently, the book store operator would be required to obtain and retain documentation that 1) the book is actually sold to a student of an institution of higher education (e.g. a student's ID card), and 2) the book is being purchased by the student upon direction of an instructor as a basis for a course of study at that institution (e.g. a letter from the instructor). Although this would place an added record-keeping burden on these retailers (as well as students and their instructors), without such documentation, virtually every book sold could escape taxation, resulting in a higher revenue loss than anticipated.
3. Related measures. Two other bills that would provide a sales and use tax exemption for books have been introduced this session. Assembly Bill 2345 (Ducheny) contains language providing a partial sales and use tax exemption (5 percent) for sales of books sold to public schools, public school students under the direction of the teacher, or to the public school teacher for professional development. Senate Bill 1701 (Johnson) contains language providing a partial sales and use tax exemption (5 percent) for purchases of textbooks by public schools. The Board Members voted to support SB 1701.

This staff analysis is provided to address various administrative, cost, revenue and policy issues; it is not to be construed to reflect or suggest the Board's formal position.

COST ESTIMATE:

Some costs would be incurred in notifying affected retailers, answering inquiries, amending appropriate regulations, and revising returns. A detailed cost estimate of the workload impacting data entry, verification, and return processing is pending.

REVENUE ESTIMATE:

For the purpose of this bill, a textbook is defined to mean any book that is principally designed for use by a student at an institution of higher education as a source of instructional material and includes, but is not limited to, any book or edition of a book that a student is directed by an instructor at an institution of higher education to purchase for use as a basis for a particular course of study at that institution.

1999 U.S. sales of college textbooks by publishers is estimated to be \$2.9 billion according to *Book Industry Trends, 1999*. An analysis of sales at college bookstores and sales by publishers indicates that textbooks have a 70% mark-up. Estimated 1999 U.S. retail sales of textbooks would amount to \$4.9 billion ($\$2.9 \text{ billion} \times 1.7 = \4.9 billion). Assuming that California accounts for 12% of those sales (the percentage of population California represents of total U.S. population), the estimated 1999 California retail sales would amount to \$588 million ($\$4.9 \text{ billion} \times .12 = \588 million).

Revenue Estimate

The revenue impact from exempting the \$588 million in sales of college textbooks from the state sales and use tax would be as follows:

	<u>Revenue Effect</u>
State Loss (5%)	\$29.4 million
Local Loss (2.25%)	\$13.2 million
Transit Loss (0.67%)	<u>\$ 4.0 million</u>
Total	<u>\$46.6 million</u>

Analysis prepared by:	Bradley E. Miller	445-6662	3/16/00
Revenue estimate by:	Timothy S. Wahl	445-0840	
Contact:	Margaret S. Shedd	322-2376	
mcc			

This staff analysis is provided to address various administrative, cost, revenue and policy issues; it is not to be construed to reflect or suggest the Board's formal position.